

# **Pentagon Prepares to Rethink Focus on Conventional Warfare**

New Emphasis on Insurgencies and Terrorism Is Planned

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The Pentagon has drafted terms for an ambitious reshaping of U.S. forces that would put less emphasis on waging conventional warfare and more on dealing with insurgencies, terrorist networks, failed states and other nontraditional threats, according to senior defense officials and others familiar with the confidential planning.

This proposed shift in strategic focus stems partly from a recognition that U.S. forces were inadequately prepared for the insurgency in Iraq and the wider hunt for terrorists around the world. But officials said it also grows out of a heightened perception of other potential threats.

The new thinking has emerged in a classified document being readied for Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's signature by the Pentagon's policy branch in coordination with the Joint Staff and service representatives. The document, called the "Terms of Reference," sets the framework for the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which Congress has mandated to compel a comprehensive look at U.S. military strategy at the start of each presidential term.

By giving a higher priority to a larger set of possible security challenges, the initiative goes beyond notions of military transformation the Bush administration has previously touted, the officials said. But with months of internal Pentagon wrangling still ahead over which programs to favor and which to cut, the ultimate result is far from certain.

This intensified push for change comes at a time when the Iraq conflict and war on terrorism have badly taxed the U.S. military, especially the Army, requiring more forces and longer deployments than anticipated and highlighting shortfalls in U.S. capabilities. Recent experience has shown that while the Pentagon remains flush with planes, ships and precision-guided munitions -- all useful in large conventional battles -- it is desperately short of other kinds of troops, weapons and specialized skills important in unconventional conflicts and postwar reconstruction.

Much of the current U.S. military was sized and shaped by an idea that emerged in the 1990s, after the demise of the Soviet Union, to focus on regional war scenarios. The Bush administration affirmed that basic notion in its first year, calling for U.S. forces to be ready to ensure "swift defeat" and "decisive victory" in major combat operations against national armies.

But defense officials now acknowledge that such goals have not fit either the Iraq situation or the anti-terrorism campaign. Nor are they applicable to other potential crises

that Pentagon policymakers have begun to take more seriously. These scenarios cover a range of unconventional possibilities, including the collapse of a nuclear-armed state, such as Pakistan or North Korea, and the disruption by enemies of key technologies on which U.S. forces rely, such as satellite navigation signals.

"The traditional focus was on conventional military threats," Douglas J. Feith, the Pentagon's policy chief, said in an interview. "We're now talking about things much broader than that."

This evolution in strategy could have significant budgetary consequences, officials said. It would divert some resources from major weapons programs, such as tactical fighter jets and aircraft carriers, and toward more ground troops -- or a different mix of troops favoring specialized areas such as intelligence gathering, foreign-language skills and civil affairs work. It also would mean greater investment in new technologies, such as improved drone aircraft, computer network defenses, and measures for countering biological or chemical attacks, officials said.

Just how much change will ensue is difficult to predict. Facing a huge federal budget deficit and mounting war costs in Iraq, Pentagon officials could feel greater pressure to make hard choices than they did during President Bush's first term. Even so, history has shown that military, business and political groups with vested interests in existing programs have often frustrated attempts at broad change.

Officials involved in preparing for the review cautioned against expecting that it will inevitably advocate a larger Army, a subject of intense argument lately between some lawmakers and the Pentagon.

"In the past, in talking about shaping the force, we spent an awful lot of our time trying to get the size right and very little of our time on the right capability mix," said Jim Thomas, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for plans. "This time we're thinking much more about what kind of capabilities we need."

Thomas said one possibility being explored is whether more Marines or regular Army troops could substitute for Special Operations units in training foreign militaries. This would free some Special Operations teams to go after terrorists and conduct other specialized missions, he said.

"When we've talked about precision warfare in the past, it's been in terms of hitting a tank or an SUV from 15,000 feet in the air with a precision munition," Thomas said. "In the future, the talk about precision gets down to the level of using individuals to go after individuals."

Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., a longtime defense analyst here, noted that Rumsfeld has the advantage, unusual among recent secretaries of defense, of having already gone through one QDR as Pentagon leader. His experience, combined with current budget pressures and Congress's tendency to defer to military judgments in wartime, offer Rumsfeld an

opportunity to use the QDR to drive for more fundamental transformation, Krepinevich said.

"For a secretary of defense who wants to change things, this is about as good as it gets," said Krepinevich, who heads the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "The question is, will Don Rumsfeld pull the trigger or not?"

A set of proposed military budget cuts for fiscal 2006, reported earlier this month, was cited by several involved in the QDR planning as a harbinger of the emerging shift. The recommended cuts, totaling about \$55 billion over the next six years, would affect some of the most prized high-tech weapons of the Air Force and Navy: The Air Force would get fewer advanced F/A-22 fighter planes and C-130J transport aircraft, and the Navy would see trims in its aircraft carrier force and planned purchases of a next-generation destroyer and Virginia-class nuclear submarines.

By contrast, the Army would receive an additional \$25 billion for restructuring aimed at breaking down its large divisions into more mobile and flexible "modular" brigades and staffing them with more military police, civil affairs soldiers, psychological operations specialists, and other capabilities for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction operations.

Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, said he had reviewed the draft QDR guidance and considers it an endorsement by Pentagon leaders of the direction in which he has started to take the Army.

"I see no inconsistency in what we're putting together and the . . . way they see the future, let me put it that way," he said in a brief interview with several reporters.

The Navy's top officer also has publicly backed the need for "a new strategic construct." In a Jan. 11 speech to the Surface Navy Association, Adm. Vern Clark, the chief of naval operations, said building forces only to deal with major combat operations "is the incorrect approach."

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Pentagon has conducted several major policy reviews attempting to come up with an effective substitute for its earlier focus on combating a single superpower adversary. During the Clinton administration, the Pentagon adopted a model that called for U.S. forces to be capable of fighting not one global war but two major regional conflicts "nearly simultaneously." This was meant to deal with the possibility that U.S. troops could be engaged in wars in the Middle East and Korea.

The Bush administration, in its first year, expanded this concept into something that came to be known as "1-4-2-1."

The "1" called for maintaining enough forces to protect the U.S. homeland, a reflection of the heightened sensitivity to domestic security after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The "4"

meant the United States needed to be ready to conduct smaller-scale peacetime operations in as many as four areas.

The "2-1" was a variation on the Clinton model. It required shaping U.S. forces sufficiently to "swiftly defeat" aggression in overlapping major conflicts while preserving the option to achieve "decisive victory" in one through regime change or occupation.

But within days of completion of this force-sizing construct in the autumn of 2001, the United States found itself fighting in Afghanistan, a war that had not been envisioned. Nor has the construct adequately provided for today's protracted war on terrorism and the prolonged rotation of Army and Marine forces into and out of Iraq.

To help determine what force changes to make in Bush's second term, Pentagon officials are using a "quad chart" devised last year to show four types of warfare: traditional, irregular (such as insurgencies), catastrophic (such as chemical or biological attack), and disruptive (such as sabotage of U.S. electrical grids).

"This QDR will be looking at how you mitigate risks in these four areas," said Clark Murdock, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who is a consultant on the QDR. "It also will look at where we have overmatch capabilities" -- meaning more than we probably need -- "and where we might be willing to take increased risks" by shifting resources.

A central challenge of the process, several people said, will be striking the right balance between attempting to fix immediate problems in Iraq and preparing adequately for tomorrow's challenges.

"We believe there are some things we can do which would have immediate, beneficial impact on the war, but they also could leave us better prepared for the longer term," Thomas said. "It's not a zero-sum competition."